

AMERICA, POLITICS, AND SPIRITUAL LIGHT

November 12, 2012 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article)

“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober” (1 Thessalonians 5:4-6).

“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light” (Romans 13:11-12).

The result of the recent U.S. election was not surprising to the Bible believer who knows the frightful spiritual condition of America, and we should not respond as unbelievers and heretics and nominal Christians respond to these confusing, frustrating times. Many are in despair, frantically trying to find a safe heaven for their wealth.

But we are not Christians in name only; we are born again by God’s Spirit and we walk in the light of God’s infallible Word. We know the times, or at least we should. We understand the underlying spiritual fundamentals of society. We are pilgrims. Our citizenship is in heaven, and we are exhorted to set our affection on things above, not on things on earth (Col. 3:1-4; Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 2:11).

The Bible shines brilliant light upon our situation in this present world, and gives us clear instructions about how to live and act in the face of the challenges of these times.

Let me say at the outset that I understand that politics and government are important, that politics and government affect our daily lives. I am not saying that we should have nothing to do with politics and that we should have no interest in what is happening at the political level.

I am simply arguing in this report that politics is not the answer to the moral, social, and economic ills our nations are facing, and we need to focus our attention on the real fundamental issues, and on God’s will, and on the things that can bring real change, and on things that have eternal value.

THE LIGHT OF JEREMIAH 23:15

“Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts concerning the prophets; Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land.”

The root problem in America is the same as that in Israel of old. God told Jeremiah that it was the prophets of Israel who had spread profaneness and filthiness throughout the land (Jer. 23:15). The fundamental issue was the apostate, compromising condition of the prophets. This is true in America (and Canada, etc.). The battle for the nation is won or lost in the churches and the Christian homes, not in the realm of politics and social warfare. The root problem with America's deep moral sickness is the apostasy in the churches. America does not have the fear of God because the churches are not preaching the fear of God, and that is because the pastors are compromisers and apostates who fear the people more than they fear God and who care more about their individual bottom line than about the truth.

Multitudes of professing Christians vote for wicked politicians and thereby support the murder of unborn children and the legitimizing of homosexuality and other such evils.

The fundamental problem is not with the belly-serving politicians; it is with the professing Christians who vote for them.

That God's curse is upon America should be obvious to any Bible believer. We are cursed with droughts and floods and tornados and multi-billion dollar mega-storms. We are cursed with rampant disease. We are cursed with foolish leaders who pursue policies guaranteed to destroy the nation. We are cursed with judges who are passionate about casting aside the very Constitution they vowed to uphold in favor of modern opinions. We are cursed with policies guaranteed to weaken commerce and destroy the value of our currency. We are cursed with the abuse of our military by the commander in chief himself. We are cursed with a mainstream media that hates the truth and rejoices in lies, that is devoted to brazen propaganda in the name of fair reporting. We are cursed with a national education system designed to produce moral rebels and spiritual fools. We are cursed with an entertainment industry fervently devoted to everything abominable in God's eyes. We are cursed with a breath-taking loss of freedom, with the government snooping into every nook and cranny of our lives and businesses.

But we must understand that the curses are the symptoms, and healing does not come by focusing on symptoms (though it is right and necessary to reprove the works of darkness, Ephesians 5:11). The fundamental element is the spiritual compromise and apostasy of professing Christians and churches that name the name of Jesus Christ, particularly in America which is a nation filled with churches and professing Christians.

The passionate politicking on the part of Bible believers; the joining hands with pagans and heretics to "save America"; shows a lack of wisdom and spiritual understanding.

There are many things we can do to help America or any other nation in which we find ourselves as pilgrims in this world, but carnal politicking and yoking together with heretics and unbelievers in blatant disobedience to God's Word (e.g., Romans 16:17; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18) is not the answer. This has been tried since the formation of the misguided Moral Majority in the 1980s

and it has only resulted in an ever steeper slide into destruction. The answer is not in another Ronald Reagan, but in a genuine spiritual revival.

THE LIGHT OF 2 CHRONICLES 7:14

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

This verse provides us with the answer to the question, “What can I do to help my nation?”

The verse is addressed to Israel, but it has an application to our day. We are told, “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Corinthians 10:11).

The answer to what we can do for the nation is to humble ourselves, and pray, and seek God’s face, and turn from our wicked ways, so that we can have the blessing and power of God.

God’s people don’t have to form any sort of majority to have a vast influence on their nation. One man or woman of God “on praying ground” can stem the tide of much evil and restrain divine judgment, at least temporarily.

We need to stop listening to the Rush Limbaughs and the Sean Hannitys and the Glenn Becks and spend serious time in God’s Word and prayer and get out into the harvest fields with the gospel and win our children to Christ and disciple them in a truly serious manner.

We need to purify our individual lives and homes and churches from the influence of the world. We need to cut off association with spiritual compromisers and apostates in according with the command of God’s Word (e.g., Romans 16:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Timothy 3:5). We need to stop reading the wrong literature and listening to the wrong music that is weakening rather than strengthening our spiritual convictions.

From my perspective, having preached in nearly 600 churches and having long communicated annually with many hundreds of Christians from various parts of the world, the average “fundamentalist” Christian is largely ignorant of the Bible. He knows enough only to be a danger to himself and others, and he has no passion to improve his understanding. He is a spiritual pygmy. He is as passionate about such vanities as professional sports and as carried away with the misguided observations of conservative political pundits as his pagan neighbor. He is ignorant of important issues that we are facing, and isn’t interested in being educated. He will read a fishing magazine and listen to sports radio and watch some empty-headed late night comedian and she will devour “Christian” romance novels, but they wouldn’t dream of reading a book to educate themselves about the Emerging Church or the New Age movement or New Evangelicalism or Contemplative Prayer or Contemporary Worship Music or other spiritual

enemies that they and their families and churches are facing and will face. As a result, as the prophet said about Israel of old, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6).

In my experience, prayer in the average Bible-believing church is so negligible as to be frightful and amazing. There are the brief prayers at the beginning and end of the services and before the preaching and a pathetic few minutes of prayer on Wednesday night and that’s pretty much it. A daily prayer closet is a foreign concept to multitudes of God’s people. Only a few decades ago churches would conduct a series of “cottage prayer meetings” for weeks before a special meeting or Bible conference, but that is overwhelmingly a thing of the past. Now we trust in advertising and carnal enthusiasm and a dynamic speaker. Only a few decades ago it was common to have a men’s prayer meeting before each service, but now that is a rarity.

We are doing less praying than ever and yet we are living in the most desperate times imaginable. How carnal and lukewarm we are!

How many Bible-believing families have family devotions? How many are seriously discipling their children in the home? How many dads and moms maintain a serious daily time in God’s Word and a daily private prayer closet? How many are serious about purifying their homes of foreign spiritual influences? How many care enough about the truth to leave a compromised church that is rapidly headed in the wrong direction?

The spiritually-weak condition of our families and churches is the reason why so few are surrendering to the call to preach and the call to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth. The parents are living more for themselves than for Christ, and the children follow in their footsteps.

The real battleground for the soul of America (or Canada or the Philippines or wherever) is not in the White House; it is in God’s House, and that is precisely where we need to focus our attention like a laser beam.

THE LIGHT OF 2 THESSALONIANS 2:3-7

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work...”

This passage gives great light upon the times. The Bible-believer who interprets prophecy literally, in accordance with how it has always been fulfilled, knows that we live in the last days and we are rushing toward the end at dizzying speed.

The mystery of iniquity is the devil's program to put the man of sin on the throne of the world. It is a program that has been operating for 2,000 years, but the Bible teaches us that its progress will gain in speed as the end draws near.

No matter what we do, we are not going to stop the runaway engine of end-time apostasy. We are not going to stop the progress of the mystery of iniquity. We are not going to stop the globalization process, the one-world church building, the New Age thinking, the me-first pop culture, or the militarism that is preparing the world for the man of sin. We are not going to lift the veil of spiritual darkness that is falling ever deeper upon mankind. We are not going to stop the spread of idolatry that is preparing men's hearts for the Idol of idols that will soon sit on the throne of this world.

Those who do not believe the Bible and do not understand its prophecies but who are somewhat conservative and reasonable in their thinking--the Ayn Ryan disciples and the Birchers and the Beckers and the bulk of the Tea Partiers--are powerfully frustrated in these times. They see the symptoms clearly. They know the evils, and they document them in books and blogs. But they don't understand the underlying spiritual issues and they don't have any real solution.

The true Bible believer must not be in this sad condition. We have more light and access to more wisdom. We know the beginning from the end in God's Word. We need to lift up our eyes and set our affection on things above.

THE LIGHT OF 2 PETER 3:8-9 AND 2 THESSALONIANS 2:7b-8

“But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.”

These two passages explain why Christ has not yet returned and why He is waiting and what is restraining the mystery of iniquity.

As for what is restraining, that is the Spirit of God. He is identified as a Person in this passage, and He is the only one powerful enough to do such a thing. He came at Pentecost to empower the churches for world evangelism and He is at the same time exercising a restraining influence on the devil's program until “He be taken out of the way,” which we believe will occur at the Rapture of New Testament saints.

The Lord is in control of the times and the seasons. As the prophet Daniel said, “Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings...” (Daniel 2:20-21). And Paul said in regard to the nations that God “hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us” (Acts 17:26-27).

The Lord is waiting because He loves men’s souls and wants to save them far more than He wants to judge them. He is not willing that any perish. He would have all men to be saved and gave himself as a ransom to make that possible (1 Timothy 2:3-6).

It is in this context that Christ has commanded that the gospel be preached to every individual in every nation (Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8), and Paul said that each believer is an ambassador in this great work (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Men cannot believe unless they hear the gospel. They have enough light in creation and conscience to condemn them and to leave them without excuse, but not enough to save them.

This brings us back to the question, “How can I help my nation?” and to the answer provided in 2 Chronicles 7:14, which is to repent of sin and obey God.

Since the five-fold repetition of the Great Commission is a powerful emphasis (Matthew 28, Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20; Acts 1), teaching us that this is something that Christ is passionate about, one of the most important ways that I can get God’s blessing on my life, my family, and my church--other things being right--is to take world evangelism seriously.

How many people heard the gospel at your hands and through your mouth in the last month?

How many missionaries were helped through your offerings?

How many missionaries and preachers do you intercede for daily?

Have you ever prayed, “Here am I Lord, send me”? Have you presented yourself a living sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1)?

When you sing “I Surrender All,” do you sing it as a hypocrite or as a fervent disciple of Jesus Christ?

Brethren, these are the things that we need to focus on like a laser beam, laying aside those things that are hindering our spiritual progress and power!

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